

Additional/Revised Information

Agenda Item #	NEW
Meeting Date	October 22, 2007
Prepared By	Jessie Carpenter City Clerk
Approved By	Barbara B. Matthews City Manager <i>BBM</i>

Discussion Item	Discussion of Sam Abbott Commemorative Plaque
Additional/ Revised Information	Nancy Abbott Young, daughter of former Mayor Sam Abbott, has proposed language for a commemorative plaque. The proposed language is attached.
Policy	N/A
Fiscal Impact	To be determined after Council discussion.
Attachments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed Language • Resolution 1991-27 • Mayoral Proclamation Dated July 4, 1991 • Clipping from the Montgomery Journal, Thursday, August 8, 1991 • Clipping from the Washington Post, Thursday, April 4, 1991 • Resolution of Condolence, 1990-117
Recommendation	Review and discuss proposed language.
Special Consideration	

The Takoma Park Municipal Building /
Sam Abbott Citizens' Center

Is dedicated to the living legacy of
Mayor Sam Abbott
(1980 – 1985)

"If we can't make it happen in Takoma Park, there's no hope for the nation."

Mayor Sammie Abdullah Abbott will always be remembered as the legendary activist and world citizen who helped transform Takoma Park into a city known throughout the nation for its commitment to participatory democracy, justice, peace, and the environment.

Among his achievements was the saving of thousands of homes from destruction by the North Central Freeway, and the leveraging of Highway Trust Funds to build the Metro system. He later helped save Takoma Park Junior High School as well as hundreds of Victorian era homes slated for demolition. He helped found Earth Day and the Takoma Park Folk Festival.

During Sam Abbott's visionary tenure as Mayor, rent stabilization was instituted; a city newsletter was created; speed bumps and 4-way stops slowed residential traffic; citizen advisory committees were established and public participation in the governmental process was encouraged. Takoma Park became Tree City, USA; a Sanctuary City for political refugees; and a Nuclear-Free Zone. Sam fought for the revitalization of Takoma Old Town and against high-density development. With an energetic City Council and an activist citizenry, Mayor Abbott led the fight for unification of our city into one county, Montgomery.

Under the banner "Takoma Park: Preserve It or Lose It," Sam Abbott spent a half century waging the battles that helped establish the identity of Takoma Park as a vibrant community that acts locally and thinks globally.

The democratic ideals to which Mayor Sam Abbott devoted his life are a living legacy and continuing part of the values that define the City of Takoma Park, MD.

*"I hate injustice...I took the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution seriously.
I took it seriously that all men are created equal."*

Introduced By: Councilmember Elrich

RESOLUTION NO. 1991-27

WHEREAS, Sam Abbott's contributions to the life of Takoma Park over the course of over a half century helped forge the spirit of participatory democracy by which we, today, proudly define our city; AND

WHEREAS, whether as political outsider or insider, as Takoma Park citizen or mayor, McCarthy era blacklistee or respected member of the Washington Area Council of Governments, Sam Abbott never strayed from the struggle for human and civil rights for all people and the rights of citizens to take a vocal and active role in the decisions that affect their lives; AND

WHEREAS, Takoma Park would today be a 10 lane freeway rather than our home town, if Sam Abbott had not organized the 15 year fight to stop the North Central Freeway.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City Council of Takoma Park desire to honor the values that Sam Abbott so consistently represented; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the City Council authorize that the words:

Sam Abbott Citizens' Center
(be placed beneath the words)
City of Takoma Park
Municipal Building

on the exterior of our City's Municipal Building. The additional words shall be sized as the words "Municipal Building"; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that at citizens' request, this honor shall be paid for by public contribution.

Dated this 25th day of March, 1991.

ATTEST:



Pauls S. Jewell, City Clerk

Mayoral Proclamation

WHEREAS, Sammie Abdullah Abbott contributed to the political life of Takoma Park and the Greater Washington community for more than four decades; AND

WHEREAS, Sam Abbott's efforts were well known both in Takoma Park and the entire Washington area; AND

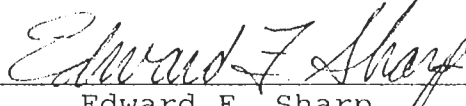
WHEREAS, in 1980 Sam Abbott was elected Mayor of Takoma Park, and as Mayor sought to increase citizen communication and participation; AND

WHEREAS, as Mayor, Sam Abbott created the City Newsletter's tabloid format, promoted tenant's rights and protection, supported the growth of the Takoma Park Folk Festival and in many other ways did his best to make Takoma Park a better place for all its citizens.


NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED That the City Council recognizes Sam Abbott's contributions to the City by adding the words "Sam Abbott Citizens' Center" to the already existing words "Municipal Building"; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That I, Edward F. Sharp, Mayor of Takoma Park, Maryland on behalf of the City Council, offer this Proclamation to the family of Sam Abbott in recognition of his contributions to this community.

Dated this 4th day of July, 1991.


Edward F. Sharp
Mayor

ATTEST:

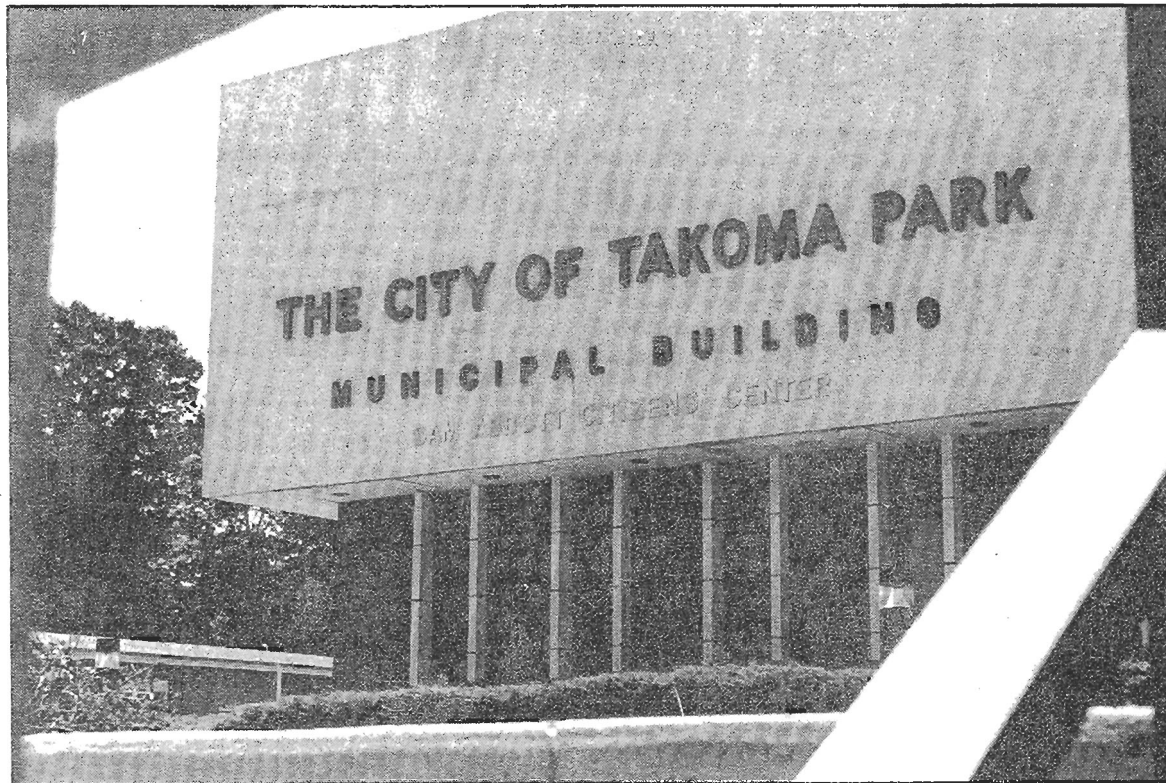

Paula S. Jewell, CMC
City Clerk



Takoma Park center bears Abbott's name

During his lifetime as an activist and political leader, Sammie Abbott left his mark on the city of Takoma Park, where he served as mayor from 1980 to 1986. Mr. Abbott, who died at the age of 82 last December, led a successful fight to kill a highway slated to run through the heart of Takoma Park and urged the city to become a nuclear-free zone in 1983.

A decorated veteran of World War II, Abbott was an outspoken opponent of the Vietnam War and helped to organize the first Earth Day celebration. On July 4, city officials dedicated Takoma Park's municipal building (right) to the memory of Sammie Abbott, who told people, "I took seriously the Declaration of Independence. I took seriously that all men are created equal."



Krista Hicks/Journal

The Washington Post

THURSDAY, APRIL 4, 1991

Takoma Park to Honor Former Mayor Abbott

■ Until his death late last year at age 82, Sammie Abbott spent half a century waging the battles that came to define Takoma Park. Abbott lobbied for tenants' rights, urged that the city become a sanctuary for Guatemalan refugees and, standing in front of bulldozers, blocked construction of a freeway he feared would destroy a neighborhood.

Although there was no doubt Abbott's contributions would be remembered, his friends wanted to ensure a permanent, prominent reminder of his legacy. The City Council recently agreed with their sentiments and approved renaming city hall in memory of the late mayor, who served from 1980 to 1985.

As soon as \$2,000 in private money can be raised, the city government building at 7500 Maple Ave. will add the words "Sam Abbott Citizens' Center" below the sign that now reads "City of Takoma Park Municipal Building."

Council member Marc Elrich, who introduced the resolution to include Abbott's name on city hall, said some of the former mayor's critics objected to the gesture. "Sam could be a difficult person at times . . . but you have to weigh a mortal's faults against a mortal's accomplishments," Elrich said, adding, "He did more things for the city than anyone has ever done."

RESOLUTION # 1990-117 OF CONDOLENCE
(Sammie Abbott)

WHEREAS, on December 15, 1990, former Mayor Sammie Abbott departed this life; AND

WHEREAS, Sammie Abdullah Abbott contributed to the political life of Takoma Park and the Greater Washington community for more than four decades; AND

WHEREAS, Sam Abbott's struggles for social justice grew to legendary proportions in the Washington area; AND

WHEREAS, these struggles in the late 1960's included organizing and leading the successful fight against the North Central Freeway, a fight that saved hundreds of homes in Takoma Park (and thousands more in adjacent communities) and maintained our identity as a community; AND

WHEREAS, these struggles in the early 1970's included the fight to save Block 69 (Takoma Avenue) and its lovely Queen Anne homes, a fight that included Sam's arrest as he sat beside other Takoma Park residents in front of the wrecking ball, a fight in which he and his neighbors were opposed by Takoma Park's government; AND

WHEREAS, these struggles in the late 1970's included the successful fight to keep Takoma Junior High School open; AND

WHEREAS, in 1980 Sam Abbott was elected Mayor of Takoma Park, a position he used to increase citizen communication and participation and in which he served until 1985; AND

WHEREAS, as Mayor, Sam Abbott created the City Newsletter's tabloid format, promoted tenant's rights and protection, expanded this City's peace and justice agenda, supported the growth of the Takoma Park Folk Festival and in many other ways did his level best to make Takoma Park a better place for all its citizens.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED That on behalf of the citizens of Takoma Park, the City Council expresses our deeply felt loss at the death of this worthwhile man, Sam Abbott on December 15, 1990 and our great appreciation for his many years of contributions to the City of Takoma Park; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the City Administrator is hereby instructed to lower the Municipal Building's United States Flag, the Maryland State Flag and the City of Takoma Park Flag and have them all flown at half-mast from December 18, 1990 to January 6, 1991; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That the City Clerk is hereby instructed to spread this Resolution among the permanent records of this City.